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OUTWARD TELEGRAM

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To: GREECE.

Cypher telegram to Sir M. Palairet (Athens)

Foreign Office, 18th January, 1941. 11.56 p.m.

No. 135

www

Your telegram No. 58 Saving [of the 26th December: position as regards continued use of Greek bases by British forces in event of Italy concluding an armistice with Greece and Great Britain].

Paragraph 1. Yes.

Paragraphs 2 and 3. In the circumstances contemplated the state of war with Italy would continue, in law, until it was terminated by a treaty of peace, and there would be no juridical reason why we should not coninue to occupy Greek bases, provided that (1) there was nothing to prevent this in the terms of the armistice and (2) Greece did not conclude peace with Italy while we were still at war with her (possibility which is ruled out in the first sentence of your telegram under reference). But there would be legal difficulties about our use of these bases for operations against Germany if Greece remained neutral in relation to Germany.

Paragraph 4. General Wavell will by now have explained to you the nature of the measures we had contemplated at Salonika. I do not believe in the theory that we can by taking this or that action "provoke" Hitler into taking action which he would otherwise not take. You should, by using arguments contained in my telegrams to Belgrade Nos. 66 and 70, try to disabuse the Greek Government of this idea which it is of course the object of German propaganda to encourage.

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